

IMPRISONED

ANARCHIST

TOBY

SHONE



THE FINAL STRAW RADIO - MARCH 3, 2024

This week, we're sharing audio from anarchist prisoner in the UK, Toby Shone. Toby was arrested in November of 2020 after a car chase and during 5 simultaneous raids on residences in the Forest of Dean outside of Bristol.

Toby was accused of being responsible for the insurrectionary counter-info anarchist site **325.NoState.Net** as well as participation in the Informal Anarchist Federation – International Revolutionary Front, authoring communiques on behalf of IAF-IRF & the Earth Liberation Front, funding terrorism and being involved in the sabotage of a cellphone tower and having information on explosives. This raid and the case were brought in conjunction with the attempted linking of a diverse array of UK anarchist projects with terrorist charges via Operation Adream, which Toby understands to be conducted in conjunction with intelligence services from the Netherlands and German. The court failed to convict Toby Shone on these charges and only succeeded in convicting him of having and distributing hallucinogens and got 3 years, 9 months. Toby was then re-arrested while out on probation for having a cellphone and attending a prisoner support event.

You'll hear two audios from Toby, first him explaining his conviction and situation during his first incarceration, and then you'll hear Toby recently answer a few of our questions and updating listeners about his recent re-imprisonment in HMP Garth, far away from his supporters in the Bristol area. Much thanks to Brighton Anarchist Black Cross for supporting Toby and this conversation. More information at <https://brightonabc.org.uk>. Brighton ABC and Tobys supporters have noted that he's been receiving pretty spotty treatment for his cancer and not getting a healthy vegan diet and so has lost some weight of recent. Tobys mail, including letters and books haven't been making their way to him at HMP Garth. It's requested that supporters consider writing Toby a postcard, letter or email to help him through these next 8 months or so before his scheduled release and to inform his crew at forestcase (at) riseup.net of the mailing so they have a record in case it doesn't get to Toby.

Brighton Anarchist Black Cross: <https://brightonabc.org.uk>

Search for this interview title at <https://thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org/> to find links to further resources on this topic, featured music, the audio version, and files for printing copies of this episode.

Transcript of an audio by Toby posted on darknights.noblogs.org between January 5th and 6th, 2022. Translations in Greek, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, German, Italian and French exist there as well:

My name is Toby Shone, and I'm an imprisoned anarchist held in Bristol prison who was kidnapped at gunpoint by the anti-terrorist unit, as part of Operation Adream in the UK. The repression was aimed to target the anarchist group of critique and practice, 325 collective and the website 325.nostate.net. Operation Adream is an attack by the British State in conjunction with European partners against anarchist direct action groups, counter-information projects, prisoner solidarity initiatives and the new anarchist critique of the technological singularity and the fourth and fifth industrial revolution. Operation Adream is the first time that anti-terrorist legislation has been used against the anarchist movement in the UK.

I was taken hostage by the regime on the 18th of November 2020 by a team of tactical fire arms cops after a car chase through the remote Forest of Dean, which is on the border with South Wales, one hour north of Bristol. At the same time coordinated raids took place at five addresses in the Forest of Dean against collective living projects, hangouts and a storage unit. I was taken under armed guard to a nearby police station where I was held in incommunicado and interrogated many, many times. I refused to speak during the interrogations and I did not cooperate with the murderers in uniform.

I was charged with four counts of terrorism. One charge of Section 2, dissemination of terrorist publications as a suspected administrator 325.nostate.net. Two charges of section 58, possession of information useful for the purposes of terrorism. Those being two videos. One of which showed how to improvise an explosive shaped charge. And the other demonstrated how to burn down a mobile phone transmitter. I was charged with Section 15, funding terrorism, which was related to cryptocurrency wallets hosted on 325.nostate.net which were for the support of anarchist prisoners and publications. I denied all the charges.

I was also accused during the interrogations of membership of FAI/IRF, the Informal Anarchist Federation/International Revolutionary Front. I was accused of writing five documents and carrying out several actions in the Bristol area, which were claimed by cells of the FAI as well as those of the Earth- and Animal Liberation Fronts. These included an incendiary attack against the police station, the burning down of a mobile phone transmitter and liberation of animals.

Bristol is an area of the UK where there has been countless anarchist sabotages and direct actions taking place over the last two decades and which remain unsolved by police, despite multi-million pound investigations and joint media witch hunts against anarchists in the city.

From the collective spaces and hangouts that were raided during Opera-

tion Adream the cops seized hundreds of copies of 325 #12 magazine, dozens of anarchist pamphlets, books, stickers, posters and flyers, laptops, mobile phones, printers, hard drives, cameras, radio frequency jammers, gps units, smoke-, noise- and flash charges, replica firearms and cash. In the evidence produced against me was numerous anarchist publications including 325 #12 magazine, which is about the fourth and fifth industrial revolution, the pamphlet “Incendiary dialogues” by Gustavo Rodríguez, Gabriel Pombo da Silva and Alfredo Cospito which is published by Black International Editions. Also the text “What is anarchism” by Alfredo Bonnano, Dark Nights newsletter, the small book “Anarchy, civil or subversive?” by 325 and Dark Matter publications, a flyer in solidarity with anarchist prisoners Alfredo Cospito and Nicola Gai, a flyer against the COVID-19 lockdowns called “Face the fear, fight the future” as well as many other texts and publications in solidarity with anarchist prisoners and revolutionary organisations such as the CCF, Conspiracy of Cells of Fire.

I was remanded to Wandsworth prison in London after appearing at Westminster Magistrates Court and held under anti-terrorist conditions. I was denied to make any phone call in the prison for ten days as well as a similar embargo on my mail. I was denied to see my lawyers for six weeks. 23.5 hour solitary confinement with sometimes up to 48 hours without being able to leave the cell for anything other than to collect a meal. No yard time for the first 3 weeks and then only allowed to go outside on the yard once a fortnight for 35 minutes. No gym, no library, no education, no activities. I was held in a dungeon like cell with no natural light and subjected to deafeningly loud construction noise as I was placed by the counter-terror unit next to a new section of the prison being built. My letters, phone calls and associations all subject to routine monitoring and censorship with constant obstruction to access for my lawyers, post and books. I did not receive the full case against me for many, many months.

Operation Adream is a montage, fitting together disparate, unconnected elements, typical of repressive operations in Southern Europe which has spread across the continent. This is now being deployed by the British police. Operation Adream seeks to present the Conspiracy of Cells of Fire as a continuation of the armed Marxist-Leninist revolutionary organisation November 17th. This is an important fantasy for the purposes of repression in this operation as November 17th is a proscribed group in UK. Most importantly, Operation Adream sought to present the diverse range of anarchist groups, publishing projects and prisoner support initiatives as an array of organisational hubs for the execution and glorification of terrorism.

The case was authorised by the Director of Public Prosecutions Max Hill QC. The investigation revealed at least the participation of Dutch and German cops, the hidden hand of the security services and an international dimension to

the operation based on previous waves of repression in Spain, Italy and Greece was evident. During my interrogations, I was being asked a pre-written script of questions which, for instance, not even the detectives appeared to understand why I was being asked as the entire operation was a marionette guided by others to achieve a political purpose. About that, I can only quote the murdered anarchist Bartholomew Vanzetti who remarked, "The higher of them, the more jackass." It is certainly appropriate as on the 6th October 2021 at Bristol Crown Court I was found Not Guilty. However, I was condemned for the possession and supply of Class A and B narcotics: the psychedelic medicines LSD, DMT, psilocybin, MDMA and marijuana, as these were all seized from the collective spaces. I was sentenced to 3 years 9 months.

I am also fighting against a Serious Organised Crime Prevention Order which is demanded by the anti-terrorist unit and the prosecutors. The order would put me under a form of house arrest for up to 5 years when I finally get released with a punishment of up to 5 years if I breach the order. The order would control and monitor my daily movements, contact with others, residence, usage of money, devices, international travel and so on. It demands precise information be given to the cops of all my friends, contacts and loved ones and is simply a means to monitor and criminalise my friendships and living environments. My trial for that is scheduled no earlier than the 15th of January and the investigation against me continues as does Operation Adream which is aimed at the 325 collective.

I want to thank all those who have supported me. My heart is open and strong and I am determined. I send to you all a huge hug and a smile.

FINAL STRAW INTERVIEW

TFSR: We're speaking with Toby Shone, anarchist currently incarcerated in Garth Prison in Leyland. Thank you very much for being willing to have this conversation.

Toby Shone: Hi, Final Straw Radio, it's Toby. Thank you for this opportunity, and I express my gratitude to the Anarchist Black Cross Brighton for facilitating.

TFSR: Prior to this conversation, we played your statement from 2022 about your initial case and imprisonment in order to give some background to your situation in your own words. The Brighton ABC website describes your re-arrest while on release to a halfway house but I wonder if you wouldn't mind sharing what happened to you and where you are now.

TS: I was transferred to the long-term high-security prison estate in October 2023 after a firework solidarity demo for my case outside where I was previously locked up in Bristol Prison. I'm currently in a cell on C-wing Garth Prison in Northwest UK. There are around 850 men in this prison, the majority of whom are on very long sentences or life. It's a brutal and unforgiving environment. But my heart is strong and I am as stubborn as ever, and I remain all repentant and anarchist to the end.

I was arrested last year in September by a tactical unit acting on the command of the Southwest counterterror police and spent nine months in conditional liberty after release on the MAPPAs, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements. The National Security Division classified me as dangerous and posing a high risk of serious harm to the general public and the state. To justify my arrest, the counterterror police and National Security Division indicate my abject refusal to cooperate with them, possession of an unauthorized smartphone, and attendance at a prisoner solidarity dinner at BASE, an anarchist social center in Easton, Bristol, as part of the International Week of Solidarity with Anarchist Prisoners, which takes place every year from August 23 till 30.

TFSR: In your explanation of the case that we played before, you spoke about Operation Adream, the raids in you community, the terrorism charges, accusations of responsibility for publishing "dangerous materials" and the

attempt to link you and other comrades and projects to international struggles and illegal activities. The crown prosecutors failed at convincing the courts and, following that, failed to successfully impose a Serious Crime Prevention Order (SCPO) that would have not only further limited your association and travel but had the purpose of social mapping your relationships and hopes of wrangling you back into prison sooner. Could you speak about the continued political pursuit of you by UK law enforcement under the guise of criminality since they couldn't get you on politics? Or is that an inappropriate distinction?

TS: About the continued investigation, little is known other than the investigative reports served with detailed intense surveillance I was under during my conditional liberty. So far, there have been no more raids, only harassment and monitoring, including a notable border detention and attempted interrogation under the counter-terrorist Schedule 7 legislation of a close comrade returning from Barcelona some time ago. As anarchists and those engaged in revolutionary struggle, we can expect ongoing, undefined, continuous surveillance and pursuit. In this, social and political crimes are merely expedient reasonings for state agencies towards their aim of neutralizing their enemies. It's clear that I, along with other comrades, have been under investigation for many years. Even now, within the prison walls, I remain under enhanced close monitoring and the attempted disruption of my contact with those outside. None of which will suppress my insurrectional speech and the transmission of the anarchic ideas. All the investigating reports, surveillance logs, and counterterror analytics are worthless trash composed of the human garbage of the state.

TFSR: In addition to the contents of that January 2022 statement, have there been any revelations concerning Operation Adream or similar coordinated law enforcement attacks on anarchists and libertarians in the UK?

TS: It's known that police coordination, including that of cross-border cooperation, exists, but again, little is known definitively at present.

But what is more important is our coordination, our international struggle, and the next generation of social war against the state, capitalism, and technological singularity. Towards this networking, we propose an International Anti-Prison Gathering in Brighton, on March 29th-31st of this year. This event is only the first part of a renewed set of encounters to support our imprisoned comrades and the struggle against the prison industrial complex. Secondly, we propose an international anti-technology gathering to take place in an as yet unconfirmed city in mainland Europe in the autumn of 2025. The details of this meeting will be avail-

able at the end of this year. Aside from the coordination of practical encounters, we can also mention the cross-pollination of the blossoming of our struggle in the streets, for which no police coordination has yet been able to prevent nor destroy, and the days and nights belong to us.

TFSR: Would you tell us about the current condition of your confinement, access to exercise, books, lawyers and your supporters, including the impacts of moving you so far from your home and main support network?

TS: I am basically locked up for 22,5 hours every day in a very small cell. As to my access to books, it's very difficult due to the conditions I am subject to to receive them. I have been denied over seven books already. It's the same with my correspondence which is heavily censored. I receive very little. The strategy of the National Security Division is based on trying to prevent me from receiving social support and isolating me from that support. To that end, I was moved to the long-term high-security prison estate. Evidently, it's a pathetic and failed repressive move, which only makes me more determined and steadfast in my outlook and my perspectives. I welcome cards and letters, and I reply to each one that I receive. You can also contact Anarchist Black Cross Brighton to send me greetings or stay in touch. I am in weekly contact with my excellent legal team, and we're working on a parole application. I doubt I'll be released before my sentence end date. I have yard time each day for 30 minutes, and I have access to the gym twice a week.

TFSR: Another huge concern for folks that are incarcerated is healthcare and it seems pertinent to ask about since what the state was able to convict you of were the drugs you were treating yourself with. On January 22nd, outside comrades published a letter of yours talking about endangerment and indecencies you've experienced with your cancer or oncology treatment experiences. How is your health and what is the status of the medical care you are able to receive?

TS: As many of you know, I'm in remission from cancer. It's been a difficult journey that some of you also face or will face. For prisoners, healthcare usually does not exist. There's a response team for drug overdoses and suicide attempts, for the aftermath of fights, stabbings, and beatings, but in my experience, there is no effective health care in the prison system in the UK. There is only neglect and endorsement of the prison's torture. Generally, the conditions are very bad, and healthcare is mostly a racket for the widespread issuing of drugs to keep prisoners compliant and addicted to opiates and psychiatric medication.

TFSR: Could you speak about your experiences with other prisoners or any lessons you've taken away from your time resisting repression or held in prison that could be helpful or insightful for the (currently) outside audience?

TS: I've always enjoyed really good relationships with the other imprisoned guys on the whole. Prison might be a horrific, dehumanizing, and violent place. But your life will continue inside. You'll find a way to live meaningfully if you keep your head up stay positive and hold on to your dreams. Many folks on the outside don't realize that they also live in a prison, a social prison, and those who risk nothing, gain nothing. So never let your fear control you, inside or out. In your heart, nurture your strength and your kindness. If you want a better world, prison is where you may end up, and this is worthwhile of respect. The revolutionary path has always had losses, but we can use each day to learn, to laugh, to keep ourselves supple, and to fill our inner life with wonder. Here we are behind the enemy lines. We are on a war footing. Listen more than you speak. Keep yourself clean and well-fed, don't fraternize with screws or snitches, don't become involved in gossip, debt, or the black market economy. Go to the gym, get your food, get out to the yard, and maintain your routines and your interests. Only you can give away your dignity and your self-respect. No one can take it from you. Life does not end when you enter the gate.

TFSR: Would you like to say anything about the support networks that have spread your word, reached in to contact you and have acted or spoken in solidarity with you on the outside?

TS: I want to express my solidarity with every comrade locked up in prison and send that embrace to all those in support networks. To all the nameless translators and agitators, to the international groups of the Anarchist Black Cross, and to the countless groups and individuals who are active. To the Forest Case, to the dark nights, to our chaotic project. To the Western Alps anti-repression fund, many thanks. A revolutionary movement can be assessed by the extent to which it takes care of its captured fighters, and to the extent it continues to struggle. I want to emphasize the restructuring of a global network of resistance, which has the destruction of prisons and the state at its core. In this, everyone can play a role in ways they choose. I want to speak of the need to reestablish an Atlantic bridge of comradeship, affinity, and social war. I want to stress the importance of the struggle against the new industrial revolutions and the singularity to come.

I am with you when you put pen to paper for our imprisoned comrades, I am with you at the benefit dinner, a soli gig, a demonstration, at the occupations

and evictions. At the barricades when stones and fire rain from the skies, when the fear changes sides, I am there with you all, because our struggle is one. With a hug, a helping hand, and a raised fist, I am beside you.

TFSR: You are scheduled for release on November 11, 2024, four years after your initial arrest. Do you have any post-relief support you want to mention where folks can throw some money to help you transition out of prison?

TS: I'm scheduled for release on the 11th of November this year, but we cannot rule out the megalomania of dirty tricks of the British regime, which I've already been threatened with recently. I expect to remain under surveillance and harassment by the National Security Division and counterterror police. This will also affect the comrades around me. We lost two out of three collective living spaces as a result of the raids in November 2020 and incurred substantial losses. The Forest Case does not concern me solely. I can't forget about those on the other side of the walls, those under investigation and hunted. If you want to contribute to the anti-repression solidarity fund for Operation Adream, please contact Anarchist Black Cross Brighton at brightonabc@riseup.net. Or the solidarity group, forestcase@riseup.net.

Thank you again, Final Straw Radio, for the initiative to break this greatly imposed isolation and help us prisoners escape the walls and the barbed wire that separates us. I've tried to answer your questions as best as I can, and any errors in interpretation and dictation are mine. This is Toby Shone, anarchist and chaotic, signing off. Thanks all for listening. Ciao.

PRISONER'S REPORT ON HMP GARTH, C WING.

1. Dirty, aging, unmaintained conditions, lack of hot water, heating, windows don't open, or they're always stuck open. It is squalid here. The maintenance contractor is Amey who does not carry out work or carries it out to a substandard level. Multiple areas of the prison have roof leaks with rain coming in and with buckets left in the corridors to collect rainwater. It's either freezing cold or too hot in the cells, and there's no water pressure.
2. Little to no access to basic cleaning products, leading to further dirty conditions of cells and living environment and lack of dignity with no functioning dryer.
3. Little to no access to basic resources such as toilet rolls, forks, spoons, bowls, and plates. No soap, toothpaste, shower gels, etc are available for the guys.
4. Offender Management Unit applications are not getting answered or dealt with, leading to a lack of progression and the ability to move on in the guys' sentences. And there are very few outgoing transfers to category C prisons, which is the lower security designation.
5. The screws are reluctant to give out envelopes and paper for writing to family and friends. There's a waiting list system in place to request envelopes and paper. This often never works. This increases isolation and lack of contact.
6. Healthcare is totally disorganized and negligent. Some guys are unable to access health care due to a long waiting list. There are reports of guys waiting three months for basic requests.
7. No access to the library for all the main wings due to regime mandates and reluctance to include the library in the regime.
8. No consistency with regimes. No routine, often only told what time we get out of cells the day before or on the day. Hardly anything ever starts on time. Visits never start properly and end before the time advertised. There's little access to activities, education, and labor. There's not enough time out cells, not enough gym slots, and there's not enough yard time. There is meaningless slave labor. No vocational

training of any use, unimaginative educational courses with no range, and they're only designed to get guys on to prison workshops.

9. Prisoners' property isn't being processed adequately. There are serious delays in getting what we are sent or what we order or what we arrive with to the prison. The catalog orders are expensive, and they're not processed on time or not processed at all. The approved retailers list is expensive and therefore unavailable for many prisoners. Books aren't allowed to be sent directly from family and friends, which is against national guidelines. Censorship and destruction of books sent here to the prison with spurious reasonings from security.

10. Lack of a functioning complaint service, willfully obstructive replies to complaints from the regime admins, and complaint forms are usually always unavailable, meaning there's a compounded failure of the complaint service. There is a lack of oversight or recourse to complaints, and this antagonizes the guys, increasing tensions on the wing.

11. The systemic problems with mail, with it not being collected from the wings and not being given out, with arbitrary censorship and a refusal from the regime to explain the censorships, and a denial that prisoners even have post. All mail is photocopied badly in black and white with no care, meaning it's often unreadable and with our photos ruined.

12. The guys couldn't call their families and friends over New Year, despite being told we could. The phone call prices are exploitative and overexpensive, and the phone's cut off overnight. British Telecom is making a lot of money from this.

13. Poor choices in the prison canteen, expensive or without stock, lack of provision of fresh products, lack of range. The prison servery has no variety. There are few choices. Poor quality, the servery takes too long, is disorganized. It leads to tensions and queue jumping, and there are no decent vegan choices or products in the canteen or servery. There's no affordability and no chickpeas, lentils, nuts, and so on.

14. Guys are brought to Garth from far away around the country, out of their area, and find it difficult to maintain external contacts and family ties. There's no public transport to the prison, and visitors are kept waiting too long with seating in cold, sparse holding areas. The visiting booking process is not functioning well. It's almost impossible to book the full allocation of visits for the guys. The visit booking phone line is almost never answered.

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